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WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 27 February 1971

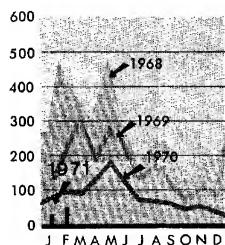
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For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

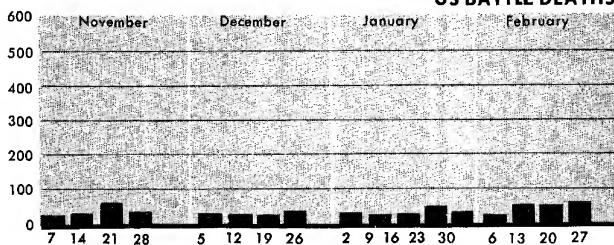
1968-1971
Weekly average for each month



NOVEMBER 1970 - FEBRUARY 1971
Weekly data as reported

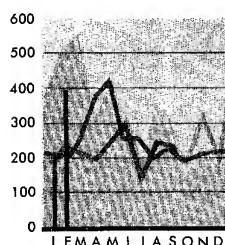
US BATTLE DEATHS

rose to 67 from the 59 of last week. This is the highest total since last September & largely results from actions in Operation LAM SON 719.



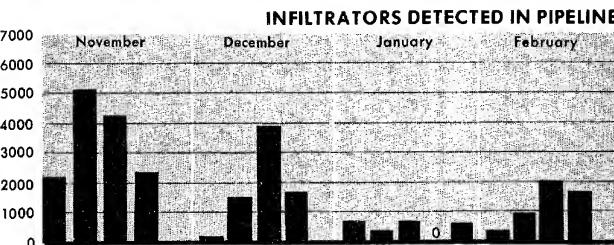
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

soared from last week's 323 to 593 - the highest total since last May reflecting the heavy action in Operation LAM SON 719.



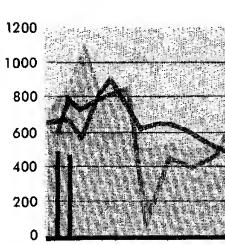
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

Stand at one battalion and seven specially designated groups detected and two gap fill groups with a combined strength of some 1809. The total number of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 is now an estimated 45,700 - 47,700.



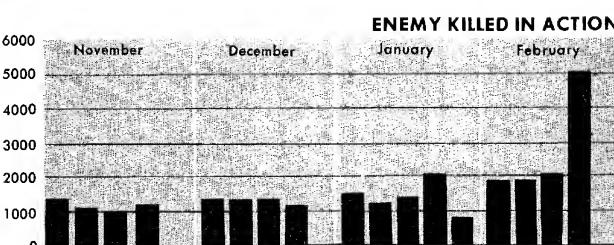
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

numbered 587, a substantial increase over the previous week's 402.



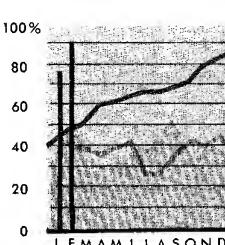
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

soared to 5107 over last week's 2260 - this is the highest total since May 1970, and reflects heavy action in Operation LAM SON 719.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces rose to an all time high of 96% over last week's 91%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated activity increased somewhat in Military Region (MR) 1 during the past week, but the overall level remained fairly low. Given the present disposition of enemy forces within MR 1 and the Communists' concern with deploying forces to counter LAM SON 719, the level of enemy activity within MR 1 itself does not seem likely to change appreciably in the near future. In MR's 2, 3, and 4, enemy-initiated activity has been at a moderate level. Enemy forces in all three of these regions are apparently being plagued by logistic and coordination difficulties. Until these problems can be overcome or alleviated, enemy efforts are likely to remain modest, despite exhortations by cadres for increased activity on the local level to offset ARVN activity in Cambodia and in the LAM SON 719 operation.

ARVN forces on Operation LAM SON 719 ran into heavy fighting during the past week, particularly at FSB 31 in the vicinity of Ban Dong in eastern Laos. Reporting from the area has been sketchy and no clear picture is thus far apparent, but the fighting has been sharp and casualties appear to have been heavy on both sides. The Communists are clearly mounting a major effort to thwart the operation and, if possible, to register a series of tactical successes against ARVN units.

In northern Laos, military action northeast of the Royal Capital of Luang Prabang (MR-I) continued with minor clashes taking place. On the Long Tieng front (MR-II), there were several enemy-initiated attacks by fire and sharp patrol/small unit engagements. In the central panhandle (MR-III), Operation DESERT RAT forces on Routes 23 and 238 south of Muong Phine alternately fought off enemy attacks and worked on interdicting the routes. On the Bolovens Plateau in the southern panhandle, the enemy gunners concentrated on harassing the major airfield now in friendly hands and kept up the pressure on smaller friendly sites.

The overall pattern of military activity in eastern Cambodia remained relatively unchanged as the ARVN dry season offensive in that region entered its fourth week. Communist forces continue to maintain their presence in or around several important base areas, particularly in the vicinity of the Chup Rubber Plantation in Kompong Cham Province, though the enemy generally seems to be avoiding major encounters with ARVN. Over the weekend, both ARVN and the Communists sustained fairly heavy losses while fighting in the vicinity of Dambe on Route 75 in central Kompong Cham Province. Elsewhere in TOAN THANG 01/71, the Communists continue to harass ARVN forces in southern Kratie Province. Routes 4 and 5 continue to be subjected to enemy mortar attacks designed to disrupt traffic on these two arteries.

Enemy Infiltration

Further evidence has been received that substantial numbers of North Vietnamese troops have entered the infiltration system undetected in North Vietnam in the past two months. These forces could have left North Vietnam in January or early February, i.e., after 6 January, when COMINT detections in North Vietnam ceased. There were no detections of infiltration starts in North Vietnam during this past week. Late reports indicate that one Laos-bound and two South Vietnam-bound groups were detected in southern Laos during the previous week. Another South Vietnam-bound group (1146) and two Laos-bound groups were detected in the Ban Karai Pass area this week. The month of February's total is thus six South Vietnam-bound, three Laos-bound, and 16 small, specially designated groups, all detected in Laos. Analysis of recent communications indicates that some 3,500 troops may now be passing through the Ban Karai area headed for southern Laos and an earlier intercept suggested that the infiltration flow would remain heavy for some time.

The detection this week of group 1146 and acceptance of the two "gap fills" raises the official infiltration estimate since 1 October 1970 to some 45,000 - 47,000. These totals would be about 3,400 higher if the six "gap groups" possibly in the pipeline were included.

South Vietnam Developments

Vice President Ky's entourage is continuing to sound out possible sources of electoral support in the event that Ky decides to run for the Presidency. An Quang Buddhist-oriented Senator Bui Tuong Huan

reported that Ky aide, Le Van Thai, approached him recently in an effort to obtain An Quang support for a Ky bid. Thai said that in a three-man race, Ky has a chance of winning and would need An Quang votes to win -- around 50 percent of the total An Quang vote, according to Thai. Senator Huan commented later to a U.S. official, and we agree, that there is no real possibility of An Quang's supporting Ky. As Ky informed Robert Shaplen the other week, Le Van Thai also told Senator Huan that Ky "had decided to run."

In another development, Senator Le Phat Dat commented that a revised election law will pass the Senate after its regular session begins on April 5 and will be signed by Thieu in early May. Senator Dat also remarked that Senate Chairman Nguyen Van Huyen is the first choice of both Thieu and Minh as a vice-presidential running mate, adding that he knows for a fact that Huyen has been approached and turned both Thieu and Minh down.

Thieu's new political initiative seems to be in limbo for the moment. He told Ambassador Bunker recently that the timing element was important and felt that the initiative should await the results of the current Laotian and Cambodian operations.

~~Top Secret~~